

City of Torrance

Press Release



BURGLAR DETAINED BY CITIZEN CHARGED BY TORRANCE INVESTIGATORS IN SERIES OF CRIMES

September 23, 2003

At approximately 9:15 p.m., Sunday, September 21, 2003, a Torrance resident of the 21000 block of Amie Avenue, discovered a burglary suspect in a vehicle, detained him and turned him over to police. Torrance Investigators later linked the suspect to 19 crimes of burglary, theft and auto theft which had occurred since mid-July 2003 in primarily Torrance and Redondo Beach.

Torrance Investigators learned the suspect would primarily commit auto burglary and auto theft crimes during the hours of darkness. The suspect would select vehicles that were in carports and were unlocked or had valuables left in plain sight. The suspect would usually take valuables that could easily be carried. He also took vehicle registration, insurance information and driver's licenses; investigators suspect these items were to be used for fraud activities.

Torrance Patrol Officers and Investigators also learned about a hotel where the suspect had been living temporarily; two accomplices were arrested at this location. Further investigation led to the recovery of more stolen property which led to identifying 7 residential burglaries that had occurred in Torrance and Redondo Beach. In one Torrance daytime, residential burglary a victim confronted the burglar inside their home however, the suspect fled before the police could be called.

Arrested were:

- Robert Gerald Thompson, 21 year old Torrance resident, was charged with 9 counts of Auto Burglary, 7 counts of Residential Burglary, 1 count of Grand Theft and 2 counts of Receiving Stolen Property
- Jason Park, 24 year old Torrance resident, was charged with 5 counts of Receiving Stolen Property and 1 count of possessing Methamphetamine
- Steve Jin Hwang, 22 year old Torrance resident, was charged with Receiving Stolen Property

Citizens are cautioned to be sure they always leave their vehicles and homes secured in order to prevent theft. All valuables should be secured in a manner where they are not visible to others.

Torrance Investigators continue the investigation of these cases while working closely with Redondo Beach Police and other South Bay police agencies. Investigators expect that additional

crimes will be identified as more follow-up investigation is done. This series of investigations is being overseen by Captain John Neu, Torrance Police Department, Special Operations Bureau Commander.

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